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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jury Finds Ex-President of Yuma Sewer Company Guilty

(Phoenix, Ariz. – June 12, 2006) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced a guilty verdict against Brent H. Weidman, former president of Far West Water & Sewer in Yuma, in a case involving the deaths of two Yuma sewer workers five years ago.

A Yuma County jury found Weidman guilty on four of the five counts he faced: two counts of negligent homicide and two counts of reckless endangerment.

The case follows Weidman's 2003 indictments for the deaths of James Gamble and Gary Lanser. They died in a sewer tank near Mesa del Sol Golf Course in Yuma on Oct. 24, 2001. Gamble entered the tank to remove a plug that was blocking sewage when a pump running sewage into the tank through another line was turned on. Gamble inhaled sewage gas and immediately collapsed into the tank. Lanser, Nathan Garrett and Connie Charles entered the tank to attempt a rescue. All three were overcome by the sewage gas. Lanser and Gamble died, and Garrett suffered damage to his lungs.

The State's investigation revealed that the company had not tested the air in the tank during the day of the incident, the workers were not properly trained on procedures to enter the sewage tanks and rescue procedures were not followed.

Weidman faces up to 3.75 years in prison. Sentencing is scheduled for June 29. Assistant Attorneys General Mark Hurlings and Christina Fitzpatrick prosecuted this case.

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